

Frequently Asked Questions

Does ADR work?

While each case is unique, general statistics from a wide range of forums indicate that mediation resolves over 50 percent of disputes.

Is participation mandatory?

Participation is strictly voluntary for employees, but it is mandatory for managers to attend.

Who mediates FAS complaints?

FAS complaints are mediated by facilitators who are experienced and trained in mediation and in federal personnel law. All internal and external mediators are neutrals, unbiased professionals, with no stake in the outcome of the mediation process.

How long does the ADR process take?

The length of the ADR process depends upon the complexity of the situation and willingness of the parties to resolve the dispute. Most mediations are completed in eight hours or less.

For more information on ADR, please contact Saundra Holt on 202-720-7234 or by email Saundra.Holt@fas.usda.gov.

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**Alternative Dispute
Resolution
(ADR)**

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

ADR is a term that describes a number of methods used to resolve disputes rather than using litigation or formal administrative procedures.

ADR includes a variety of processes designed to help people resolve their own disputes in a creative, productive, and non-adversarial ways.

Common types of ADR are:

- Arbitration
- Coaching
- Conciliation
- Early neutral evaluation
- Facilitation
- Informal discussions
- Mediation
- Shuttle diplomacy



These processes may be used separately or together, depending upon the situation.

What Can ADR Do for You?

ADR can help resolve disputes affecting FAS employees and external applicants. By helping parties to identify their interests, communicate more effectively, and explore creative solutions, ADR often leads to durable outcomes that satisfy each party's interests. In the process, ADR can enhance, build, and rebuild workplace relationships.

How is ADR Different?

ADR provides a means of bringing together the most concerned parties with an emphasis on listening and improving communication.

Compared to litigation, formal administrative processes, and other adversarial approaches, ADR is often:

- Less time-consuming;
- Less contentious; and
- Less expensive

ADR also helps people work out their differences together. Additionally, ADR is completely voluntary (you can opt out at any time), so it provides a relatively safe way of dealing with potentially difficult situations.

Advantages of ADR

Many parties prefer mediation as a dispute resolution process because it is:

- Informal
- Confidential
- Quick and inexpensive
- Mutually satisfactory results
- Greater control by participants
- Preservation of relationships
- Comprehensive and customized agreements
- A foundation for future problem-solving



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